

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6485

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 2058

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, SHUM, NU

SUBJECT: OPPOSITION ATTITUDES TOWARDS DIALOGUE

REF: (A) MANAGUA 1939, (B) STATE 58395

SUMMARY: DURING RECENT WEEKS THE EMB HAS NOTED UNDERCURRENTS OF CHANGE IN OPPOSITION ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE POSSIBILITY OF A DIALOGUE WITH SOMOZA OR WITH THE LIBERAL PARTY. THERE IS GROWING CONCERN,

ESPECIALLY AMONG PRIVATE SECTOR OPPOSITIONISTS, BUT ALSO AMONG OPPOSITION POLITICANS, THAT LEFTISTS ARE GAINING ENOUGH MOMENTUM AND INVOLVING SO MANY PEOPLE IN PROTESTS, CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE, AND ACTS OF VIOLENCE THAT THE SITUATION MIGHT BECOME UNCONTROLLABLE. THIS CONCERN NOT ONLY HAS FOUND EXPRESSION IN DIRECT AND SUBTLE SUGGESTIONS THAT THE U.S. SHOULD INTERVENE IN SOME FORM, BUT ALSO IN SOME SOUL SEARCHING ABOUT A NICARAGUAN SOLUTION. END SUMMARY

1. DURING RECENT WEEKS CONTACTS BY AMB AND OTHER EMBOFFS WITH THE LEADERS AND OTHER MILITANTS OF OPPOSITION PRIVATE SECTOR GROUPS AND POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE INDICATED THAT THESE OPPOSITIONISTS ARE CONFIDENTIAL

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PRIVATELY RETHINKING THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARDS SOME FORM OF DIALOGUE WITH SOMOZA. THE PRIMARY MOTIVATION FOR THIS CHANGE APPEARS TO BE CONCERN THAT THE FSLN AND LEFTISTS IN GENERAL ARE INCREASINGLY MOBILIZING WORKERS, STUDENTS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC IN ANTI-REGIME DEMONSTRATIONS, AND THAT THEY (THE DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION) MAY BE LOSING THEIR ABILITY TO INFLUENCE FUTURE EVENTS UNLESS THEY ASSERT SOME LEADERSHIP NOW.

2. THE AMB HAS BEEN APPROACHED RECENTLY BY VARIOUS INDIVIDUALS REPRESENTING DIFFERENT OPPOSITION GROUPS SEEKING U.S. INVOLVEMENT IF THEY UNDERTAKE TO MOVE AWAY FROM THEIR CURRENT PUBLIC POSITION OF INTRANSIGENCE TOWARDS A DIALOGUE WITH SOMOZA (REF A). THE MOST RECENT CONTACTS HAVE COME FROM PRIVATE SECTOR OPPOSITIONISTS. THE AMB HAS BEEN INFORMED OF A MEETING SCHEDULED FOR MAY 4 OF THE CHAMBERS OF INDUSTRY, COMMERCE AND CONSTRUCTION AND THE POLITICAL MOVEMENTS OF UDEL AND THE NEWLY FORMED DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT (MDN). THEY ARE PLANNING TO DISCUSS WHETHER AND HOW TO ENTER INTO CONTACT WITH SOMOZA. ONE SUGGESTION WHICH WILL APPARENTLY BE MADE IS TO INVOLVE THE PAPAL NUNCIO, THE U.S. AMB AND AT LEAST TWO OF HIS COLLEAGUES FROM OTHER IMPORTANT EMBASSIES. THE AMB HAS INDICATED THE U.S. CANNOT BE DRAWN INTO A MESSENGER, MEDIATOR, OR GUARANTOR ROLE. HOWEVER, THE AMB INDICATED HE COULD RAISE WITH THE DEPT. THE POSSIBILITY OF BECOMING INVOLVED, WITH OTHERS, IN A MODERATOR ROLE. EMB WILL REPORT SUCH A REQUEST WHEN, AND IF, IT IS RECEIVED.

3. EMB HAS SEPARATELY BEEN INFORMED OF VARIOUS INITIATIVES AMONG THE SEVERAL FACTIONS OF THE TRADITIONAL OPPOSITION CONSERVATIVE PARTY TO DRAW TOGETHER AGAIN TO PRESENT A MORE VIABLE POLITICAL FORCE FOR ENTERING INTO POLITICAL BARGAINING WITH THE GON. THERE ARE ONLY LIMITED INDICATIONS OF PROGRESS ON THIS FRONT TO DATE. THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE POSITION OF THE OFFICIAL CONSERVATIVES (PCN) REMAINS THAT OF "NO DIALOGUE WITH SOMOZA." HOWEVER, THERE IS A NUCLEUS OF DISSIDENTS WITHIN THE PCN WHICH IS OUTSPOKENLY CRITICAL OF THIS
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POSITION. IN THE LAST SESSION OF THE CONGRESS, WHICH WAS STUDYING THE PROPOSED PARTIAL AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION TO PERMIT ELECTORAL REFORM, THE PCN AGAIN BOYCOTTED THE SESSION; BUT ONE DEPUTY, JULIO MOLINA, REMAINED IN THE SESSION TO CRITICIZE THE PROPOSAL AND CALL FOR SUSPENDED ACTION ON THE INITIATIVES. MOLINA PROPOSED THAT ALL POLITICALLY ACTIVE GROUPS, INCLUDING THE FSLN, BE INVITED BY THE CONGRESS TO DISCUSS A BROADER CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM WHICH WOULD DEAL WITH THE FULL RANGE OF OPPOSITION DEMANDS BEFORE FURTHER ACTION BE TAKEN ON THE PENDING PROPOSAL. THIS MOTION, A FORM OF CALL FOR A DIALOGUE, WAS NOT ACCEPTED, BUT IT DEMONSTRATES FURTHER INCONFORMITY WITH AN INCALCITRANT OPPOSITION POSITION.

4. IN A MEETING ON MAY 2 OF AMB AND POLOFF WITH BANCO NICARAGUENSE PRESIDENT MONTEALEGRE, HE ACCEPTED THE IDEA THAT SOME NEGOTIATION WITH SOMOZA IS NECESSARY. BUT HE WONDERED WHY SOMOZA COULDN'T PREPARE THE PROPER CLIMATE BY DECLARING AN AMNESTY FOR FSLN PRISONERS AND SUPPORTERS OUTSIDE NICARAGUA SUCH AS "THE TWELVA", AS WELL AS ABOLISHING THE RADIO AND TV CODE. AMB REPLIED THAT THESE WERE POINTS WHICH SHOULD BE PRESENTED TO SOMOZA BY THE OPPOSITION. MONTEALEGRE SAID HE DIDN'T SEE WHO COULD TAKE THE LEAD TOWARD INITIATING CONTACTS WITH SOMOZA, BUT SAID HE WOULD REFLECT ON THIS PROBLEM.

5. COMMENT: THE ABOVE AND NUMEROUS OTHER SIMILAR CONVERSATIONS INDICATE THAT ON A PRIVATE AND PHILOSOPHICAL LEVEL SOME POLITICAL OPPOSITIONISTS AND MOST PRIVATE SECTOR OPPOSITION LEADERS ACCEPT THE LOGIC OF SOME FORM OF A DIALOGUE PROCESS. TO DATE, HOWEVER, THE READINESS OF ANY GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS TO TRY TO TRANSLATE SUCH PHILOSOPHICAL ACCEPTANCE INTO CONCRETE INITIATIVES HAS BEEN MINIMAL.
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